



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Superintendents' Webcast

SUMMARY

WEBCAST DATE: MAY 5, 2020

SUMMARY:

Agenda Item: Welcome

Presenter: Kevin C. Brown, Interim Commissioner

Summary of Discussion:

Interim Commissioner Kevin C. Brown welcomed everyone and provided a brief overview of the agenda.

Agenda Item: Equitable Services

Presenter: Kelly Foster, Ed.D., Associate Commissioner

David Millanti, Assistant Director

Office of Continuous Improvement and Support

Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion:

KDE's application for Elementary and Secondary School Emergency (ESSER) funds was approved. Guidance about obtaining the funds is forthcoming and financial assurance documents will be posted.

The U.S. Department of Education released guidance on equitable services. David Millanti reviewed district responsibilities and services that may be provided. It was noted that enrollment data collected from private schools does not adhere to Title I rules, but spans the total K-12 enrollment in the private school. Equitable services provisions apply to ESSER and the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funds. Additional information can be found in the [presentation](#) used during the webcast.

Question: Has it been determined how GEER funds will be distributed to districts and how much districts will receive?

Answer: The method of distribution is still being determined and will be shared within the next couple of days.

Question: Will the FRAM deadline of Oct. 1 be extended?

Answer: The deadline for FRAM has not been extended at this time.

Question: Is it permissible to use CARES Act funding to pay for alternate graduation ceremonies?

Answer: It is permissible under ESSER funds.

Question: Do equitable services provisions apply to homeschools within the district?

Answer: Yes, if they were in operation prior to March 13, 2020.

Question: Are CARES funds allocated based on the school location or the residence of its students?

Answer: Funds reserved for private school services are based on the location of the school and not district to district residency.

Question: If districts already have sent equitable services participation notices to homeschools and private schools, must notifications be sent again considering CARES Act funding?

Answer: Yes. If notices for participation already have been sent, separate notifications must be sent for CARES Act funding because CARES Act funding is open to all non-public schools as a separate pot of money.

The audience was reminded that guidance was distributed in the commissioner's May 4 Monday Message.

Feedback:

None.

Follow-up Required:

None.

Agenda Item: 2020 Legislative Update

Presenter: Tracy Goff Herman, Interim Director of Government Relations
Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion:

This year's session was truncated due to the pandemic and it is likely the special session in June will look different than usual. Tracy Goff Herman reviewed Senate and House bills passed during the 2020 legislative session, including [House Bill 352](#), the budget bill.

The budget bill allows districts to adopt a working budget that includes a minimum reserve of less than 2%, with Kentucky Board of Education approval. The budget bill is for one year only, so the second year must be addressed during the 2021 session or during a special session. Another significant bill affecting K-12 education is [Senate Bill 158](#), which makes major changes to the accountability system. Federal legislation is being monitored and information regarding impact on states will be communicated as information becomes available. Details can be found in the [presentation](#) used during the webcast.

Question: Will assessment waivers be considered for the 2020-2021 school year?

Answer: That topic has not come up yet, but it is a conversation that likely will occur at the national level, as a federal waiver was granted this year.

Feedback:

None.

Follow-up Required:

None.

Agenda Item: Task Force Update

Presenter: Karen Dodd, Chief Performance Officer

Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion:

The Education Continuation Task Force is one of several KDE advisory groups. KDE has made a concerted effort recently to align the agenda topics across all advisory groups. The focus of the task force has shifted from Phase 1 topics pertaining to NTI instruction and ending the 2019-2020 school year to Phase 2, which includes summer programming and planning for school re-opening. Task force feedback is sought through guiding questions and exit slips. A summary of each meeting and links to the recorded meetings are available on KDE's [Education Continuation Task Force webpage](#). Karen Dodd reviewed content and feedback from the May 4 meeting. Topics included CARES Act funding, summer learning, re-opening strategies and mental health. Task force members are concerned about the safety of re-opening schools and the emotional well-being of students and staff.

Question: Is it possible to be more inclusive on the task force? There is only one superintendent on the task force.

Answer: The guiding coalition, which was a group with various roles within the education family that advised the commissioner and KDE on major policy issues, was temporarily converted to the task force, which has a broader membership than the guiding coalition. Groups represented are posted on the [Education Continuation Task Force webpage](#). To keep membership manageable, all superintendents are represented through one current superintendent, role group members and co-ops.

Feedback:

None.

Follow-up Required:

None.

Agenda Item: Re-Opening Options

Presenters: Kevin C. Brown, Interim Commissioner of Education

Kentucky Department of Education

Summary of Discussion:

Interim Commissioner Kevin C. Brown updated the group on a phone call he had with the governor and lieutenant governor. When planning for re-opening, districts must consider various

scenarios that could occur depending on the public health landscape, which is changing daily. Three options for consideration were discussed:

- Early start: Late July or early August;
- Traditional start: The normal calendar if there were no pandemic; and
- Late start: After Labor Day.

Calendar decisions belong to local districts and local boards may decide to approve three calendars so adjustments can be made quickly. Social distancing practices may need to be included in calendar planning, such as staggered attendance and bussing issues.

Feedback:

None.

Follow-up Required:

None.

Agenda Item: General Question and Answer Session

Presenters: Kentucky Department of Education Leadership Team

Question: Is it allowable for students to exit their cars to receive their diplomas during drive-in graduation ceremonies held outdoors?

Answer: The options presented in the guidance document have been approved by the governor and public health. Deviating from the general parameters requires consultation with and approval from the local health department. The rule for church services has been that it is not permitted to exit the car. All questions related to graduation must be coordinated with local health departments, as they know the specifics on each community and location.

Question: Will KDE's graduation guidelines change on May 20, when in-person worship services resume?

Answer: The guidance document was written based on the current restrictions in place. KDE's Office of Finance and Operations will follow up with the Department for Public Health (DPH) and if changes to the guidance are necessary, the document will be updated and distributed.

Question: The local health department said it will follow KDE's guidelines and not provide a final answer regarding graduation ceremonies. How should this be handled?

Answer: KDE consulted with DPH when developing the guidance document and they wanted local health departments to have input. The person who asked the question should email Toni Konz Tatman or Kay Kennedy directly to discuss specifics.

Question: Is there any way for students to complete industry certifications before graduation online or in person with small or individual groups? Students are not able to earn the corresponding graduation cords and scholarships due to missing certification exams.

Answer: Currently there is no definitive answer to when or if students will be able to complete industry certifications, but guidance will be issued on the COVID-19 site as information becomes available. Guidance about clinical experiences is being finalized and will be distributed in the next day or two.

Question: What is the expectation or recommendation for summer feeding during June and after June 30? The waiver from United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for non-congregate feeding expires on June 30.

Answer: The recommendation for June is to continue feeding in a non-congregate setting. KDE will request a waiver extension for non-congregate feeding beyond June 30 if a national waiver is not granted.

Question: Will attendance policies change when school re-opens? For example, what will the expectation be if a child spikes a fever and needs to stay home for an extended time?

Answer: There currently is no answer. Every provision and process for daily school operations, such as whether students will be able to get vaccinations before beginning school, is under consideration.

Question: Could districts institute individual NTI days for kids that may need to be out due to illness?

Answer: That question addresses several topics: home hospital learning, NTI and competency-based instruction. Additional research into this topic is needed and guidance will be issued to address related questions.

Question: Does the emergency legislation passed this year (e.g. unlimited NTI days) apply to the 2020-2021 school year as well?

Answer: Not currently, but the situation will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Questions addressed together:

- Districts can develop several scenarios for opening school, but what will be permissible? What are the minimum requirements?
- Should districts offer in-person and online classes? Some parents will not be comfortable regardless of when schools open.
- Will more home hospital services be recommended?

Answer: KDE is researching the answers to these questions and how the new home hospital legislation may apply. Guidance will be issued as information becomes available.

Question: During discussions of opening school in the fall with adjusted schedules, what is being proposed to support families for childcare when their students are not in school?

Answer: Brown has not seen a proposal yet, but the issue is being discussed widely as a pressing problem.

Question: How should districts proceed when students are not able to get physicals? Doctors' offices are not currently scheduling physicals.

Answer: That issue is under consideration. Guidance will be issued as information becomes available.

Question: Should districts/schools provide masks for all workers entering school buildings?

Answer: Masks will be required in public beginning May 11, including workers in school buildings. Most individuals should have cloth or paper masks, but it is advised to keep a supply for those who do not.

Question: Is there a plan to address homeschool? There is a concern that families may choose to homeschool their children instead of sending them to in-person classes.

Answer: Strong communication at the district level is key to ensuring families are aware of the efforts taking place to keep students and staff safe. When appropriate, districts are encouraged to engage Family Resource and Youth Service Centers with hard-to-reach families.

Question: Is KDE considering using the ADM instead of ADA for funding purposes since we will be encouraging students to stay at home more frequently?

Answer: The ADM has been a topic of discussion even before the pandemic. There are pros and cons and the impact of COVID-19 on attendance still is unknown.

Question: Is there a specific day we need to use for enrollment numbers?

Answer: The person who submitted the question was asked to email [Robin Kinney](#) with more specifics in order to answer the question.

Question: May districts administer certain evaluations with individual children wearing PPE and social distancing in order to meet special education timelines?

Answer: The governor's Healthy at Work guidelines should be followed, and it is advised to consult with local health departments before deciding.

Question: Has there been discussion about budget reductions as a result of the projected budget shortfall in the current fiscal year for districts, including LARS funding items like safe schools, state agency programs, etc.?

Answer: Last week, the Office of State Budget Director issued a letter advising state agencies of the projected shortfall for the rest of this fiscal year, ending June 30, 2020. Each agency was given a number to hit in anticipation of the shortfall. KDE's number is \$3.1 million and does not currently include SEEK funding or health insurance. A tentative plan has been developed and at this time, it will not affect local school districts directly. It should be noted that we are "down to the bone." KDE has lost a significant amount of staff, which will affect services provided to local school districts. Additional information that may impact districts will be shared as it becomes available.

Question: Will each school district be able to pay for half of up to five busses with the Volkswagen settlement? Is it this year only?

Answer: Funding from the Volkswagen settlement will be administered by the Energy and Environment Cabinet and guidance has not yet been issued. Information will be distributed as it becomes available.

Question: How should districts proceed with hiring coaches when the sports season may not occur?

Answer: There is not a definitive answer to address this issue yet. Questions also may be directed to the [Kentucky High School Athletic Association](#) (KHSAA). KHSAA Commissioner Julian Tackett is holding a Q&A session via telephone on Friday, May 8.

Question: May districts consolidate in the area of technology, using more technicians in lieu of a district technology coordinator (DTC)? Could a director of operations serve as a supervisor and contract out additional management to assist with online learning needs due to COVID-19?

Answer: It is permissible under CARES Act funding to hire contractors on a temporary basis to deploy new technology needs. The downside of not having a DTC is losing the connection to the bigger picture of how technology aligns with instructional needs, as well as with administrative and technical needs. DTCs can teach staff how to use new technology effectively, engaging the people side of technology.

Question: Does KDE have guidance about senior parades, particularly if students are walking and not driving?

Answer: KDE's recommendation is that students should not be out of the cars, but Commissioner Brown is deferring to the local health department for the final decision.

Question: When will we receive the Flexible Funds State Grant Tentative allocations for FY21?

Answer: If the question is addressing Flex Focus Funds (ESS and SafeSchools), they will be dispersed on the normal schedule beginning in early July. Fourth quarter 2020 payments have been made.

Question: HB352 allows flexibility to use ESS funds for general operating expenses, but is the flexibility still there to transfer to other funds within the Flexible Focus Funds like preschool, SafeSchools and instructional resources?

Answer: Yes. The language in HB 352 allows districts to flex out of flex funds into general funds, but the language within flex funds remains. For example, districts may use ESS funds for professional development. There are exceptions for flexing preschool funds, so contact KDE before using preschool funds for other purposes.

Agenda Item: Adjournment

Presenter: Kevin C. Brown, Interim Commissioner

Discussion:

Brown ended the meeting by expressing his gratitude for the hard work of education professionals across the state. Unanswered questions will be addressed in the Q&A document and during next week's webcast.

The next superintendents webcast is scheduled for Tuesday, May 12, at 2 p.m. ET. Re-opening options will be discussed in more depth.